

Mayor Amy Viering called a meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 7, 2011. Roll Call. Present: Aldermen Barry Cox, Retha Elston, Linda Marley, Joe Martin, and Lou Sotelo. Absent: Alderman Skip Lee.

Also present were City Attorney Ron Coplan, City Manager Scott Shumard, Interim Fire Chief Gary Cook, Police Chief Ron Potthoff, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

There was no communication from Visitors.

Alderman Cox made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as follows:

- A) City Council Minutes of February 22, 2011
- B) Bills and Payroll totaling \$334,055.28
- C) Plan Commission Minutes of January 27, 2011
- D) Refer to Plan Commission a Petition from Matt and Toni Garland at 1902 Avenue D requesting to subdivide their property into two separate zoning lots

The motion was seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve **Ordinance No. 2011-03-03 Amending the Sign Code, Article VI (Signs), Chapter 102 of the Sterling Municipal Code**; seconded by Alderman Marley.

Mayor Viering addressed an issue raised by the media and Plan Commission members, whether Alderman Cox can vote on the sign code. Mayor Viering advised that Council members evaluate their conscience as to whether they should vote on specific issues.

Alderman Elston thanked the Plan Commission for their many months of hard work. She stated that several citizens had approached her to find out if Alderman Cox would be permitted to vote on the sign code. Attorney Coplan stated that the Mayor and Council members cannot prohibit an individual from voting on any issue. A conflict of interest occurs when there is a direct monetary benefit derived from voting on a specific issue. Coplan summarized that no one can determine the impact or effect of the proposed changes. He noted that Alderman Cox is an employee of a sign company. Signs are not being prohibited; therefore, it is difficult to determine direct or indirect conflict.

Mayor Viering noted that Alderman Lee is not in attendance but is in favor of the proposed changes to the sign code. Mayor Viering introduced the City Planner Dustin Wolff with Mead & Hunt to briefly review the sign code amendments.

Planner Wolff summarized the Plan Commission's efforts:

- Plan Commission sought public involvement throughout the process.
- New definitions include redefining the Central Business District and distinguishing between sign types with more graphics.
- General sign requirements were amended and no new billboards will be allowed.
- Bulk requirements have been revised, pertaining to height and size for freestanding and wall signs.
- Regulations for residential signs were revised.
- Central Business District Regulations were changed. A-frame/sandwich board signs and projecting signs are now permitted. Neon and electronic message signs are prohibited, except "open" signs.
- Changeable copy signs and electronic message boards are permitted when subordinate to primary signs; sizes vary dependent on the business district.
- Shopping center signs were addressed.
- Temporary signs were addressed.
- Appearance, construction and maintenance of signs have been addressed and the City can take action to assure signs are properly maintained.
- Non-conforming signs may remain.
- Signs on properties with a closed business must be removed.

Alderman Sotelo asked about signs that are grandfathered. Planner Wolff explained that an existing sign that is non-conforming may remain in perpetuity.

Santos Rodriguez, 1201 Griswold, owns America's Comfort Zone. He was concerned if he would be able to install a sign for his business in a residential district. Mike Wolber explained that he cannot install a sign in a residential district, but he was not permitted under the existing sign code, either.

Gary Durling of 17591 Timber Drive, Sterling expressed concern about informational billboards. Durling asked what the impetus was for revamping the sign code. Planner Wolff explained that when the City revised its Comprehensive Plan in 2004 and 2005, participants worked on the community's character. Signs were a part of this. The sign code was also outdated because it has not kept up with modern technology, such as electronic message boards.

Mayor Viering thanked Planner Wolff, City staff, the Plan Commission and business owners who worked on these updates to the sign code. These combined efforts are a great example of how the process works.

Voting on the sign code: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Mayor Viering introduced Ted Redmond from Leo A. Daly. Redmond presented the workplace evaluation and the schematic design package with a budget estimate. The workplace evaluation addresses repairs, space needs, and occupant experiences. These

are indicators for a better work environment. This information was obtained through on-site studies and questionnaires completed by employees.

Redmond reviewed the drawings for the garden level and first level of the Coliseum.

Alderman Elston asked how noisy it will be with all desks in an open area. Redmond admitted it will be unbearable; however, the design of furniture systems can reduce the noise levels.

Alderman Elston asked how many seats will be in the Council Chambers. Redmond stated approximately 50 seats, which will be adjustable.

Redmond explained the project budget costs. The construction costs are estimated at \$3,193,868, plus additional costs for administration, fees, furnishings, technology, and contingencies. An annual escalation of 5% inflation is included because the job will expand over a two-year period. Construction could start around the middle of August 2011 and could span 14 months. Occupied space takes longer for construction and relocation.

Alderman Elston asked if \$1 million covers the heating system. Redmond confirmed that it is a full gut of the electrical and heating. The heating system is estimated at \$1 million. Redmond assured there will be better temperature control throughout the building.

Chief Potthoff asked if offices that are not being remodeled will receive fresh paint. Redmond stated that offices remaining unchanged will receive new ceilings, fresh paint and new floor coverings. The air exchange will be greatly improved.

Mayor Viering wished Alderman Marley a happy birthday tomorrow.

Alderman Sotelo made a motion to adjourn to a closed session at 7:42 p.m. to discuss purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body as provided for under 5ILCS 120/2; seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Sotelo made a motion to reconvene the open meeting at 8:41 p.m.; seconded by Alderman Martin. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried.

With no further business to discuss, Alderman Martin made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Alderman Sotelo. Voting: Ayes – All. Nays – None. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.